

detail has been given. Especial attention has been paid to the solvent glands. The general part, and most of the numerous illustrations, will chiefly interest the histologist, but the systematist will hardly derive much help or hints from this part of avine anatomy.

XXXVI.—*Letters, Proceedings of the British Ornithologists' Union, Extracts, Obituary, &c.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors of 'The Ibis'" :—

SIRS,—On the 16th January last, through the kindness of Mr. Arthur W. Elford, British Vice-Consul at Catania, Sicily, I came into possession of a fine specimen of *Porphyrion alleni* Thompson, which had been obtained on the 4th of December, 1902, at the Pantano di Catania, an extensive tract of marshy land near the town of that name. The bird in question was shot by a local sportsman, Signor Vincenzo Auteri, who, fortunately recognising its rarity, took it to a taxidermist and had the skin prepared by him. The specimen was not sexed, but, judging from its wing-length (6·10 inches), I presume it to be a male. The average wing-length in a series of specimens of this species in my collection is 6 inches in the case of males, and 5·60 inches in that of females.

This makes the sixth recorded instance of the occurrence of this tropical species in Europe, four of the previous captures having been effected in Italy and one in Spain. Of the four examples obtained in Italy, no less than three come from the neighbourhood of Lucca in Tuscany, while the fourth is from the vicinity of Pachino in Sicily (Giglioli, 'Avifauna Italica,' p. 353).

According to Signor Auteri, another of these birds was seen by him about the middle of January this year not far from the Lake of Lentini, also near Catania, but was not secured.

I may also here mention having lately heard from the naturalist Blanc of Tunis that a specimen of *Porphyrion alleni* was obtained in December last near Bizerta in North Tunisia, and was prepared by him for a customer.

As Prof. Giglioli observes (*Avifauna Italica*, p. 354), it is a singular fact, and one worthy of notice, as being contrary to the generally accepted ideas regarding the laws governing the migration of birds, that the cases recorded of the occurrence in Europe of this tropical Ethiopian species should all have occurred during the autumn or winter months.

The species has no doubt rightly been separated generically from *Porphyrio* under the name of *Porphyryula* Blyth, or *Porphyriola*, as perhaps it should be spelled.

While on the subject of *rare aves*, for this part of the world at least, I may mention having this winter obtained a fine adult specimen of the Gannet (*Sula bassana*). This was taken alive in a fishing-net off the coast near Palermo and brought to me by some fishermen. The bird lived in my garden for more than two months, but died about the end of March, on the approach of warm weather.

This northern species, although apparently common in winter about the Straits of Gibraltar, is more or less rare so far east in the Mediterranean as Sicily, particularly in its adult dress; and the present capture is, I believe, but the third recorded for Italy in that state of plumage. The Florence Museum possesses one; another, obtained off the small island of Levanzo in the month of May, is in the Trapani Lyceum collection, and that now recorded appears to be the third. Young Gannets in their dark dress are more often met with in this part of the Mediterranean, and I myself last year obtained one of them here, and another near Tunis. The species, although no doubt more or less uncommon on the Italian coasts, is probably less rare than is generally supposed. Colonel Irby, who was in Palermo during the past winter, informed me that he and his son, when out walking one day, saw an adult Gannet flying not far from the shore below Monte Pellegrino. From Tunis also I have heard of an adult Gannet having been obtained during the past winter on the Lake of Bizerta.

Yours &c.,

JOSEPH I. S. WHITAKER.

Palermo,
May 30th, 1903.

SIRS,—It will be interesting for your readers to know that, being in Lyons last autumn, I bought a fine specimen of the Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo ferox*) in the flesh. It had been obtained on October 3rd, 1902, on the Rhone near Feysin, a locality about three miles from Lyons. It was skinned in my presence at Mr. Casartelli's establishment, and proved on dissection to be a young female; it is now in my collection at Caoddo (Padova). When I informed my friend Dr. L. Bureau of this occurrence, the distinguished Director of the Museum of Nantes wrote to me that the specimen in question is of great importance, being the second taken in France. The only example previously known was killed on September 2nd, 1878, by Dr. de Montessus in the Department of Saône d. Loire, and is now preserved in the Museum of Autun.

Yours &c.,

COUNT E. ARRIGONI DEGLI ODDI.

Villa del Monte a Pulicciano,
Certaldo Val d'Elsa (Toscana).
March 24th, 1903.

SIRS,—I ought to have pointed out before that in the 'Ibis' for 1902 (p. 410) Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant has made it appear that I obtained examples of *Pyrhulanda leucotis* (Stanl.) on the White Nile in 1900. The species, however, of which I procured specimens was *P. melanocephala* (Licht.), but from want of material I identified them wrongly as *P. leucotis* (see Ibis, 1901, p. 245).

Yours &c.,

Holmehurst, Burley, New Forest,
May 19, 1903.

HARRY F. WITHERBY.

Proceedings at the Anniversary Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union, 1903.—The Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union was held in the meeting-room of the Zoological Society of London, 3 Hanover Square (by permission of the Council of that Society), on

Wednesday, the 13th of May, at 6 P.M. Dr. F. DuCane Godman, F.R.S., the President, took the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting having been read and confirmed, the following Report of the Committee was read :—“The Committee regret to have to announce the loss by death since the last Anniversary of two Ordinary Members of the Union, namely, Mr. Thomas E. Buckley (an old and highly valued member) and Mr. Nigel Gurney. There have been five resignations, viz., those of Mr. F. E. Beddard, F.R.S., Mr. S. R. Crockett, Mr. Lionel Hinxman, Mr. P. M. C. Kermode, and Mr. W. Stoate. One election has been cancelled under Rule V. (that of Mr. A. E. Maxwell), and two members have been removed under Rule VI. (the Hon. R. Coke and Mr. J. L. Newman).

“The Union on May 13th consisted of 365 Ordinary Members, 2 Extra-Ordinary Members, 9 Honorary Members (one less than the complement, owing to the lamented death of Dr. Gustav Radde, Director of the Tiflis Museum), and 19 Foreign Members.

“There are at present 21 candidates for the Ordinary Membership, whilst Mr. R. Ridgway’s transference from the Foreign to the Honorary Membership is recommended by the Committee, who also recommend Dr. G. Martorelli for election as a Foreign Member, and Col. W. Vincent Legge (at present an Ordinary Member), Capt. F. W. Hutton, F.R.S., and Mr. A. J. North for election as Colonial Members under Rule II. as amended at the last General Meeting.”

The Meeting then proceeded to elect officers for the ensuing year, when it was announced that Dr. F. DuCane Godman, F.R.S., had been re-elected President, Mr. Howard Saunders Secretary, and Mr. W. E. de Winton a member of the Committee in place of Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, who had retired by rotation.

The following twenty gentlemen were then ballotted for and elected Ordinary Members :—Max Bartels, Pasir Datar, Java, Dutch Indies; The Rev. Francis L. Blathwayt, 173

Monks Road, Lincoln; Godfrey P. Burrell, Brooklands, Alton, Hants; Frederick O. Pickard Cambridge, 35 Haydon Park Road, Wimbledon; John C. Crowley, B.A., 16 Chatsworth Road, Croydon; Edward V. Earle, Franks, Farningham, Kent; Nevin H. Foster, Hillsborough, Co. Down; Hugh S. Gladstone, B.A., Capenoch, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, N.B.; Ambrose Y. Lethbridge, Warmwell, Dorchester; The Rev. Henry H. Mills, Treslothan Vicarage, Camborne, Cornwall; Major Frederick W. Proctor, Downfield, Maidenhead; Pilcher G. Ralfe, The Parade, Castletown, Isle of Man; Frederick R. Ratcliff, 24 Lancaster Gate, W.; William E. Renaut, 15 Grafton Square, Clapham, S.W.; Capt. Robert P. Sandeman, Dan-y-Park, Crickhowell; Capt. Richard Sparrow, 7th Dragoon Guards, and Rookwoods, Sible Headingham, Essex; Claud B. Ticehurst, Winstowe, St. Leonard's-on-Sea; Hugh B. Watt, 3 Victoria Drive, Mount Florida, Glasgow; Stephen J. White, Oakwood, Crayford, Kent; Charles H. T. Whitehead, Deighton Grove, York.

It was agreed that the name of Mr. Robert Ridgway, C.M.Z.S., should be transferred from the list of Foreign to that of Honorary Members.

The following members were then elected Colonial Members of the Union:—Capt. F. W. Hutton, F.R.S., C.M.Z.S., Col. W. Vincent Legge, F.Z.S., and Alfred J. North, C.M.Z.S.; and Dr. Giacinto Martorelli, of Milan, was elected a Foreign Member.

After a vote of thanks to the Council of the Zoological Society of London for the use of their rooms had been unanimously agreed to the Meeting adjourned.

The Annual Dinner, subsequently held at Lämmer's Hotel (Dr. F. DuCane Godman in the Chair), was attended by seventeen Members and Guests.

MR. WALTER GOODFELLOW, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., is gone on a new ornithological Expedition, and on this occasion has

selected the "Far East" for his collecting-ground. A letter from him, written in January last and dated at Dasao, Mindanao, Philippines, informs us that he was shortly leaving that port for the high mountains in the interior of the island, where he hoped to meet with birds as yet undiscovered. He describes the present state of Mindanao as "fairly quiet," and states that the American officers have been most kind to him, and have helped him in every way.

The last letters received from Mr. MICHAEL J. NICHOLL, Naturalist to the Earl of Crawford's S.Y. 'Valhalla,' were posted at Suva, Fijis. After touching at Punta Arenas, in the Straits of Magellan, the yacht proceeded to the Pacific by Smyth's Channel. The scenery was very fine there, but bird-life was scarce. Mr. Nicholl obtained specimens of all the birds he saw, including three species of Cormorants, Skuas, Diving Petrels, a Goose, and a Rail. At Valparaiso several Gulls were obtained, besides Petrels and Albatrosses. Short visits were made to Easter and Pitcairn Islands. At the latter island five specimens of a *Zosterops* were obtained. About 100 bird-skins, sent home from Valparaiso, have been received safely at the British Museum.

The Ostrich-farm at Nice.—The new Ostrich-farm at Nice is well worth a visit. It is about 2 miles out of the city on the Cagnes road, but is easily accessible by "tram." The farm is conducted on strictly mercantile principles, the object being not only to breed Ostriches, but to sell "feather-goods" of all sorts produced by these birds. The present stock on the farm consists of about 100 birds imported from California. The stock now in California, where there are several flourishing Ostrich-farms (at San Diego and elsewhere), was originally obtained from the Cape, so that these birds belong to the form of Ostrich distinguished as *Struthio camelus capensis*; but there are also some birds lately received from North Africa, which, when adult, will, no doubt, turn out to be examples

of typical *S. camelus*. The eggs are mostly hatched in an incubator. The Director of the Nice Ostrich-farm is Mr. W. S. Belfield. We believe that this is the first Ostrich-farm established in Europe, and heartily wish it success.

The Philadelphian Collection of Birds.—The Report of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia for 1902 gives a good account of the condition and prospects of its celebrated collection of birds, which is now, we believe, mainly under the care of Mr. Witmer Stone. About one-half the mounted series has been re-arranged in systematic order on the “new ornithological floor,” after having been carefully examined by the taxidermist and properly labelled. The large “study collection” in skins has been likewise well attended to. Among the important additions received during the past year have been a series from Sumatra collected and presented by Mr. A. C. Harrison and Dr. H. M. Hiller, a set of Galapagan birds obtained by purchase, and a good series of New-Mexican birds collected by Mr. Rehn.

The Hart Museum, Christchurch.—We are pleased to learn from ‘The Standard’ of June 8th that the Hart Museum of Birds at Christchurch is likely to find a permanent home at Bournemouth. ‘The Standard’ makes the following remarks:—

“All visitors to Christchurch who are interested in matters ornithological know the well-stocked Museum which stands about half-way between the railway station and the famous Abbey. Everybody with even an elementary acquaintance with local avifaunas knows that this museum contains one of the best collections of birds ever got together and set up by one man from a single district. In some respects it may be said to resemble the museum on the Dyke-road, at Brighton, for the late E. T. Booth shot the specimens and mounted them himself, and he is said to have been ‘the first to exhibit not merely a collection of stuffed birds, but

rather a true representation of bird-life and haunts.' There, however, the resemblance ends. Booth took the British Islands for his hunting-grounds, but the life-work of the owner of the Christchurch Museum has been almost entirely done in the New Forest district, which the Victoria County History defines, for the purposes of natural history, as the tract of country lying between Southampton Water on the east and the Avon on the west.

"As a rule, the breeding species, whether resident or simply coming here for nesting purposes, are represented by the male and female; and, wherever possible, nest, eggs, and immature young are added. The cases in which the birds are mounted are small; but the principle laid down by Booth of a close adherence to natural surroundings, and insisted on in the Bird-Gallery of the Natural History Museum, is here followed. According to the last-published Catalogue (1894), there are about a hundred cases of Passerine birds, of which the most important are an Alpine Accentor, shot in the old Castle gardens in 1855; the Bearded Titmouse, now extinct in the district; the Golden Oriole, which has nested on Lord Malmesbury's estate, and of which species there is an egg in the collection; locally-killed Choughs (1861); and the Nutcracker, the actual specimen referred to by the late John Henry Gurney in his 'Rambles of a Naturalist.' The Picarian birds occupy about a dozen cases, the most important being the Roller and the Bee-eater; and there are some excellent examples of the Hoopoe, which is probably increasing as a breeding species. The Eagle Owl and Snowy Owl came from the Grantley-Berkeley Collection, dispersed many years ago; but the evidence for their occurrence in Hampshire would scarcely satisfy Ornithologists of the present day.

"The gem of the museum is the case of Honey-Buzzards; the male and female were obtained in 1860, when several pairs of these birds visited the Forest, and a nestling was got in 1875.

"Other noteworthy examples of Birds of Prey are a pair of

Red-footed Falcons, a pair of Ospreys (1870), and a single example of the Kite. The Egyptian Goose and the Summer Duck should be discarded as having no connexion with the county, being probably escapes from ornamental waters.

“The Rails and Plovers are well represented, as are Gulls, Terns, Petrels, and Divers. The late Lord Lilford believed that the White-winged Black Tern formerly bred near the Avon, for the visitors on the spring migration are always met with at one particular spot on the river.

“For some time it has been known that Mr. Hart wished to dispose of his collection as a whole. Last November the suggestion was made that it should be acquired by the County Borough of Bournemouth, where it might be suitably housed, and constitute the nucleus whence should develop a museum illustrating the biology of Hants and Dorset. The immediate reply to that suggestion was the offer of £100 from a local resident towards a fund for the purchase of the collection and the erection of a suitable museum. Quite recently the matter has again come to the front, and at a meeting, under the presidency of the Mayor, the resolution was carried that it was desirable in the interests of Bournemouth to purchase the Hart Collection, and a committee has been appointed to give effect to this expression of the popular will.”—*Standard*.

OBITUARY.—A much valued friend and correspondent has been lost to us by the death of Dr. GUSTAV RADDE, the well-known Director of the Caucasian Museum at Tiflis, and a veteran worker in Ornithology. Radde, the son of a schoolmaster at Danzig, was born in 1831, and from early youth showed his predilection for Natural History. In 1852 and the following years he was employed in the Crimea, as assistant to the botanist Steven, in collecting plants and making drawings of them. A memoir on the botany of the Tauric Peninsula written by him was published in the ‘Bulletin’ of the Society of Naturalists of Moscow in 1854.

In 1855 Radde obtained the post of Botanist and Zoologist to Schwartz's expedition to the newly annexed Amoorland, and passed four years in the exploration of that then almost unexplored region. The result of this famous expedition was a series of works and memoirs on the geography, ethnography, and zoology of Eastern Siberia, of which that of the greatest interest to Ornithologists is the quarto volume on the "*Festlands-Ornis*," published by the Russian Geographical Society in 1863, and well known to most of our readers as containing one of the best accounts of the birds of Eastern Siberia.

In 1864 Radde removed to the Caucasus and took up his residence at Tiflis, where he founded a Natural History Museum and Library and remained actively engaged in their administration and on various kindred pursuits up to the time of his death. Next to the Siberian volume, Radde's '*Ornis Caucasica*,' published at Cassel in 1884, is the one amongst his numerous scientific works and memoirs, illustrative of the Natural History of the Caucasus and of the adjoining portions of the Russian dominions, by which he is best known to Ornithologists. Radde was throughout his life an ardent traveller, and was frequently engaged in excursions of a longer or shorter character. When the Grand Duke Michael made his yacht-voyage to India and Japan in 1895, Radde was selected to accompany him, and he was again chosen two years later to go along with some members of the Imperial family to North Africa. Radde spoke English fluently, and was well acquainted with many of our Union, of which he was a Foreign Member. He was also a Foreign Member of the Zoological Society of London, and received one of the Gold Medals of the Geographical Society in 1889. At the time of his death he was engaged in the preparation of an account of the Collections of the Caucasian Museum, of which three volumes (out of six) have already appeared.